

Who won the war of 1812



The war of 1812, waged between Britain and the United States, lasted for close to three years and symbolised a national stand against foreign intervention and a declaration of sovereignty (Latimer, 2007). Yet, it has commanded very little attention among historians. In fact, while the majority of Americans are familiar with the War of Independence and many can recite key events and turning points within it, few can do the same as regards the War of 1812, the second war with the British. Indeed, the War of 1812 appears to have been virtually ignored by historians. While determining the reasons for the aforementioned may be quite difficult, it can be argued that this is largely due to the fact that the war was inconclusive. In other words, not only does the war emerge as somewhat senseless but ended in a stalemate. A closer analysis of this particular conflict, however, exposes the aforementioned as a superficial understanding of the War of 1812. While it may have ended in a stalemate between the British and the American armies, an argument for the United States' victory can be made, both because of the Battle of New Orleans and the destruction of the Indian confederation.

The War of 1812 was incited by nationalist sentiments and America's determined quest for independence. While the country had emerged victorious from the American Revolution of 1783, Britain did not withdraw from the Great Lakes territory and provided the frontier Indians with quite significant backing against the American forces (Latimer, 2007). Accordingly, Britain's presence in the country did not simply comprise a threat to its independence but a threat to the nation's security. Within the context of the stated, the War of 1812 was not a senseless war as it has generally been portrayed but a war waged for the purposes of eliminating the threat which Britain posed to the country's sovereignty and security.

The War of 1812, as indicated above, had a specific purpose and to the extent that this purpose was partly satisfied, the United States arguably won the war. This war witnessed the elimination of the Indian confederation and the effective annihilation of their capacity to engage in continued and prolonged conflict with the American forces to the east of the Mississippi (Latimer, 2007). One of the most important consequences of the War of 1812 was that it cut-off the Indian confederation from British assistance, with the implication being that the supplies and munitions that they relied upon to conduct and sustain conflict was no longer available to them. Further to that, the said war led to the death of most of the Indian leaders, with the most important being the death of Tecumseh in 1813. Tecumseh's death immediately led to the crumbling of the confederation and hence to the elimination of this particular threat (Latimer, 2007). It is important to note here that the aforementioned is immediately traceable to the War of 1812 as it was as a consequence of this war that the British and the confederation were cut off from one another. By achieving the elimination of the confederation, therefore, the Americans partly won the War of 1812.

In further support of the argument that the Americans won the War of 1812, it is important to emphasise that despite the fact that the war ended in a stalemate, the Americans did win the Battle of New Orleans. Officially speaking, the war ended with the Treaty of Ghent, signifying that neither side had emerged as a clear victor but that both agreed to end the war (Borneman, 2005). Nevertheless, just after the Treaty of Ghent, the American forces led by Andrew Jackson emerged as victories from the Battle of New Orleans. Theirs was a clear victory over the British forces and the only reason why victory in this battle does not equate to victory in this war is

that a peace treaty was signed in a different place as this particular battle was raging (Borneman, 2005). Had the treaty been shortly postponed or delayed, the American forces would probably have had no need for it. In other words, in arguing for an American victory in the War of 1812, the Battle of New Orleans should be taken into consideration.

In the final analysis and as based upon the preceding, it should be emphasised that history does not admit to any side having won the war. History is based upon objective facts and to the extent that the Treaty of Ghent concluded the war, history maintains that neither side one.

Nevertheless, were one to analyse the consequences of the war, one would concede to the fact that it partly fulfilled its aim. Further to that, the American forces gained a clear victory over the British in the Battle of New Orleans. Thus, were one obliged to name a victor in this war, it would be the Americans.

Bibliography

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Latimer, J. (2007) *1812: War With America*. NY: Belknap Press.